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CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

Seoir do Dhia a n- fna hárduib, agus ríochán aip an ocalam deagóil do na dáoimí.

LUKE ii. 14.

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USAGES OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH WITH RESPECT TO THE EUCHARIST.

THE question has been often discussed in our pages, Did the ancient Church believe in transubstantiation? and several passages from the fathers have been examined in which they treat on this subject. We purpose in this article, without entering into any detailed investigation of the doctrinal statements in the writings of the fathers, to give an account of some of the particulars in which the usages and practices of the ancient Church differed from those of the modern Church of Rome. When we have gone through them all it will decisively appear that the changes of practice have arisen from a change of doctrine; that the modern usages harmonize with a belief in transubstantiation, and have taken their origin from it, while the ancient practices are quite irreconcileable with that belief.

I. The practice of the modern Roman Catholic Church is, that every member of it is bound to hear mass every Sunday and holiday; but it is no part of the obligation that he should communicate or receive the Eucharist on each occasion. All that he is required to do is to be present at the consecration, and that not on all occasions, as our readers will perceive from the Pope's late Encyclical letter referred to in another column (*infra*, p. 79); and so it constantly happens that no one actually receives the Eucharist but the officiating priest himself. It is not merely members of their own Church who are allowed to be present at mass without communicating, but even those whom they regard as heretics. We have known the presence of Protestants at mass to be not only permitted, but encouraged; and we have seen in Roman Catholic newspapers, in accounts of solemn masses celebrated with fine music and gorgeous rites, mention made with satisfaction that several Protestants had been present. Now, the practice of the early Church was a good deal unlike this.

It was part of the discipline of the ancient Church to exclude all catechumens (that is to say, those who were under instruction preparatory to the rite of baptism), and all those under penance, from being present at the celebration of the Eucharist; and it was required that all those present should communicate. At the commencement of the service the deacons made solemn proclamation that all non-communicants, catechumens, penitents, and unbelievers should withdraw; while, on the other hand, those who had been once admitted into the fellowship of the Church were severely censured if they abstained from communicating. Thus, in the so-called Apostolical canons (Labbe, vol. i., p. 25), "If any of the faithful come to church to hear the Scriptures read, and stay not to join in the prayers and receive the communion, let them be excommunicated as the authors of disorder in the Church." And the Council of Antioch, which was in the fourth century, repeats this decree (Labbe, vol. ii., p. 562), "Let all those be cast out of the Church who come to hear the Scriptures read in the church, but do not communicate with the people in prayer, or who disorderly turn away from the participation of the Eucharist, till by confession, and by exhibiting fruits of repentance, and by entreaty, they have obtained pardon." In the time of St. Chrysostom the love of Christians had much cooled down, and they were often slow to respond to the invitation given them to participate in the feast of the Lord's table. This good father repeatedly chides his congregation for their want of zeal in this

matter, and rebukes alike those who left the church before the consecration of the Eucharist and those who remained without communicating. Thus, to the former he says (Benedict. Ed., vol. i., p. 469), "I often observe a great multitude flock together to hear the sermon, but when the time of the holy mysteries comes I can see few or none of them, which makes me sigh from the bottom of my heart that when I, your fellow-servant, am discoursing to you, you are ready to tread upon one another for earnestness to hear, and continue very attentive to the end; but when Christ, our common Lord and Master, is ready to appear in the holy mysteries, the church becomes empty and deserted. What pardon or excuse can be allowed for this? By this neglect you lose all the praise that is due to your diligence in hearing. If you had laid up in your hearts what I preach to you it would have retained you in the church and brought you to the holy mysteries with piety and veneration; but now, as if you were hearing one play upon an instrument, the preacher has no sooner done than you withdraw, barren of all edification." We can judge from the very rebukes of St. Chrysostom what was the belief and what the habitual feelings were of those whom he addresses. It is quite plain that those whom he here scolds were, if we may use the expression, bad Protestants, and not bad Roman Catholics. Many a Roman Catholic now never hears a sermon for weeks and months together, and yet is not a less devout and obedient member of his Church; but he never dreams of neglecting to hear mass. If you heard a congregation roundly scolded because, while they were eager to run after a popular preacher, and diligent in hearing sermons, they would never remain for the celebration of the Eucharist, there could not be a doubt that it would be a Protestant and not a Roman Catholic congregation. As the faults, then, into which the careless and indifferent of those days fell were the faults into which a careless and indifferent Protestant would fall now-a-days, and not those into which a careless and indifferent Roman Catholic would fall, we may judge thus of the general tone of feeling among the Christians of the fifth century.

St. Chrysostom is not less vehement against those who, according to modern Roman Catholic custom, remained during the prayers and consecration of the Eucharist, but who did not communicate (Benedict. Ed., vol. xi., p. 22): "In vain is the daily sacrifice. In vain do we stand at the altar; there is none who communicates. I say this not that you should communicate any way, but that you should make yourselves worthy to communicate. Are you not worthy to communicate? Then neither are you worthy of the prayer. Do you hear the herald standing and saying, All who are under penance depart. If, then, you are of those who are under penance, you ought not to communicate; for he who does not communicate is under penance. Why does he say, 'All ye that cannot pray depart?' And why do you impudently stay? You are not one of those, you will say, but of those that may partake. Consider, I pray, and seriously weigh the matter. The royal table is prepared, the angels stand ministering by, the King Himself is present, and you stand gaping, your garments are defiled, and yet you are under no concern. Nay, but, say you, my garments are clean. Well, then, sit down and communicate. He, the King, comes in daily to see the guests; He addresses all, and now He says in your conscience, Friend, how stand you here not having a wedding garment. He does not say why are you sat down, but before he was sat down, before he entered in, He pronounces him unworthy. He does not say, 'Why art thou sat down?' but 'Why camest thou in hither?' The same now He says to every one of us who stand here with an impudent boldness; for every one that does not partake is shameless and impudent. For this reason they that are in sin are first cast out. . . . As, therefore, none of those who are not initiated ought to be present, so neither ought any of those that are initiated if they be defiled. Tell me, if any one that is invited to a feast washes his hands and sits down, and is ready for the table, and yet, after all, eats not, does he not affront him that invited him. Were it not better that such a man should not be present? Likewise, thou also art present; thou hast sung the hymn and made profession with the rest that thou art one of those that are worthy, in that thou didst

not depart with the unworthy. How is it that thou remainest and dost not partake of the table? 'I am unworthy,' he says. Then thou art also unworthy of the communion which takes place in the prayers. For it is not only by the things set before us, but by those hymns also, that the Holy Spirit descends."

Thus, the reader sees how energetically St. Chrysostom condemns as an abuse what is now the ordinary custom in the Roman Catholic Church. He can see no reason which a Christian can give for not communicating which does not also apply to his being present. If he says that he is unworthy of the one, he is also unworthy of the other. He remarks that the guest who had not on a wedding garment was rebuked, not for feasting unworthily, but for *coming in* unprepared to the place where the feast was celebrated. And he tells them, in fine, that the object of his admonition is not to prevent them from coming, but to make them come worthily, so that they may not only come, but also communicate.

We have now clearly established one difference of practice between the ancient Church and the modern Roman Catholic Church, and we think that there are strong reasons for believing that the difference in practice corresponds to a difference in doctrine. The Church of Rome requires only the presence of her people at the sacrifice of the mass, because she believes that a sacrifice is there offered independent of any co-operation of theirs, and that a presence of Christ is manifested irrespective of any faith of theirs. Is it not plain that St. Chrysostom, just as a Protestant would do now, lays all the stress, not on the presence of his people during the celebration of the Eucharist, but on their actually communicating; and is not the presumption that he believed, as Protestants do, that the presence of our Lord is not so much in the elements themselves as in the worthy recipient of them, and that the benefits of the Eucharist are conferred, not by gazing on it, but by the faithful participation of it.

The ancient Church tried to exclude mere spectators of the rite; the Romish Church admits as many spectators as please to come, and often has but one recipient of the Eucharist, namely, the priest. The ancients considered the rite as a sacrament representing Christ's passion and crucifixion, and as a feast on his sacrifice; the moderns look on it as merely a means of producing the corporal presence of the Saviour among them, and are taken up with adoration more than anything else. The ancients looked upon it as an invitation to a table where the sacrament was to be their meal; but in the modern Church you are called to look on the King present, sitting in state, and chiefly to take care that on the sign given all may fall down and worship Him.

And this brings us to the second division of our subject—another practice of the modern Church of Rome which did not exist in the early Church.

II.—THE ELEVATION OF THE HOST.

The Roman Catholic Missal directs, that when the priest has uttered the words of consecration, "This is my body," then holding the host between his forefinger and thumb, he is to kneel and adore it. After that he is to rise, to lift the host on high, and, fixing his eyes upon it (as, likewise, in the elevation of the cup), to show it reverently to the people to be adored by them. This practice of elevation and adoration harmonizes very well with the doctrine of transubstantiation; but the practice is absolutely modern. No mention of such a rite as elevation is given in the writings of any of those fathers who have given us the fullest accounts of the Liturgical usages of the ancient Church; neither in Justin Martyr, nor in the Apostolical Constitutions, nor in Cyril of Jerusalem, nor in the pretended Dionysius the Areopagite, nor any other tolerably early writer. We find no mention in the Latin Church of this practice of elevation prior to the eleventh century, the very era of the Berengarian controversy. It is remarkable that we find the new practice springing up at the very time when we have evidence that the popular belief on this subject had begun to shape itself into the form since adopted by the Roman Church. Among the later Greeks, indeed, we find an elevation of the Eucharist, but not for the purposes of adoration. Thus, Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, mentions that one of the ends of the elevation was to represent Christ lifted up on the cross as

well as to symbolize His resurrection. Another reason mentioned by another Greek writer is, by exhibiting this food of the saints to invite them to partake of it. But in the Latin Church, this main end of the Eucharist—the partaking of it—is strangely neglected, and their whole thoughts are engaged with the adoration of it, the adorning the place of its residence, the exhibiting of it in public processions, and so forth. The ancient Church, on the other hand, exhibited it when the faithful were to receive it; and when this was not to be done they wholly concealed it.

III.—The Roman Catholic Church, believing in a corporal presence of our Lord in the Eucharist, quite irrespective of any faith in the recipient, and believing that the consecrated host is nothing else than the body of our Lord Himself, naturally take a number of precautions to guard so precious an object against the least possibility of accident or insult. When we find that all these precautions were unknown to the ancient Church, a presumption arises that their faith was not the same.

Thus the modern Roman Church has denied the cup to the laity, the obvious reason being the greater risk of accident to which the consecrated wine is liable, the danger of spilling, of some drops sticking to the beards of the recipients, and so forth. It is confessed by Roman Catholics that in the ancient Church the practice was to communicate in both kinds. Nay, Pope Gelasius has said that a division of the sacrament cannot take place without great sacrilege. How was it that the ancient Church never felt the inconveniences arising from the danger of spilling the contents of the cup, and that they never discovered the doctrine of concomitance, in virtue of which the species of bread is supposed to convey all that can be conveyed by the reception of both elements? We do not dwell on this topic, as communion in one kind has been the subject of several articles already, and we shall probably return to the subject again, and we pass on to speak of regulations about the reception of the consecrated host.

IV.—The modern Church of Rome directs that it shall be given, not into the hands of the recipient, but should be placed by the priest in his mouth. Thus, in "What every Christian must know," full directions are given to the recipient in what manner he must take it. "Kneel down at the altar, take the cloth into your hands, and hold it before your breast, do not wipe your mouth with it; let your head be raised up, the eyes shut, the mouth open, the tongue forward and resting on the under lip. Shut your mouth after receiving the blessed sacrament, and when it is a little moistened on your tongue swallow it. If it stops on the roof of your mouth, do not remove it with your hand, but with your tongue." Now, the ancient Church knew nothing of this idea that the sacrament is too sacred to be touched by the hands of any but the priests. Nothing is easier to prove than that the primitive Christians received it into their hands. Thus, Tertullian reproaches the Christian statuaries that "they reached their hands to the Lord's body, which had made bodies for devils."—(Lib. de Idol., cap. 7.) St. Ambrose, repelling Theodosius from the Lord's table, after the slaughter he had made at Thessalonica, asks, "How wilt thou extend thy hands, yet dripping with the blood of an unjust slaughter? How, with those hands, wilt thou receive the Lord's most holy body?" It is useless to multiply quotations in proof of what no one acquainted with antiquity will deny. But, now, if the ancient Church had the same faith as the Roman Church in the presence of the natural body of our Lord in the Eucharist, is it not likely that their practice would have been the same, unless we suppose that the primitive Christians had less concern for our Saviour's honour than Roman Catholics have now?

V.—One of the objects intended to be gained by forbidding Roman Catholics to take the blessed sacrament into their hands is to prevent their reserving it, or taking it home with them. The Church of Rome forbids the consecrated host being kept anywhere except in a public chapel. The Council of Trent forbids even nuns to have it in their choirs (see Session 25, cap. x.), all former grants and privileges notwithstanding.

Now, in the ancient Church, on the other hand, the reservation of the Eucharist was the common custom, and lay Christians took home with them what they received, to be taken by them privately at home. Thus, Tertullian, speaking of a woman marrying a heathen husband, asks her, "Whether her husband would not know what it was that she tasted in secret before all her other food?" Cyprian tells a story of a woman who, having sacrificed at the heathen altars, when she came afterwards to open the chest in which she kept the holy sacrament, was terrified by fire rising from it, so that she dared not touch it. What would Roman Catholics now think of taking the consecrated host home with them, and locking it up in a box? Believing it to be what they think it to be, would not such an usage of it amount to profanation? In another ancient tract against the Roman shows, erroneously attributed to St. Cyprian; the writer describes one going straight from the Christian church to the Roman shows, and says that "he dared, if he could, to carry the Holy Spirit into a brothel; who, hastening to the show, and bearing with him the Eucharist, as is ordinary, carried it among the obscene bodies of harlots." We might add many more quotations in proof

of the same thing, but we need add no more. Is it credible that the ancient Church would submit the real body of our Lord to the risk of such indignities as are here described?

VI.—Nor was the risk of profanation greater from the irreverence of the recipient than it was from their superstitious regard for it. Thus, what will our readers think of making the consecrated host into a plaster? Yet, St. Gregory Nazianzen reports, to his sister's commendation, that whatever of the antitypes of Christ's precious body or blood she treasured up, she mixed with her tears, and anointed her whole body with it for her recovery out of a grievous disease. And St. Augustine tells a story (see vol. xi., p. 1114) of a man named Acacius, who was born with closed eyes, the eyelids adhering closely together; that the physicians wished to open them by a surgical operation, but his mother refused to consent, and, when the boy was about five years old, cured him by a cataplasm made of the Eucharist. St. Augustine, it must be remembered, tells this story, not to censure the conduct of the mother, but with praise of her whom he calls a religious woman. We know nothing which can more clearly show the sense of the Church of that day. If they regarded the consecrated elements as we do, as the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, it was not unnatural that they should regard, with high veneration, the sacrament of so great a thing. Nay, it is not to be wondered at they should proceed to lengths which we might consider superstitious, and should think it likely to possess healing virtues. But if they supposed that in the host was resident the body, soul, and divinity of the Saviour of the world, is it credible that they would act as they did? Would priests give their Lord's body to every baptized man and woman in the congregation to dispose of according to their will—some to take it home and lock it up in their chests, some to carry it off to the place of harlots; and is it credible that pious and religious women would take what they believed to be their Creator's body and make it up into cataplasms?

The subject of the usages of the ancient Church, with respect to the Eucharist, is not nearly exhausted, and there are abundant materials for such another article as the present. But we have said enough to show that the practices of the early Church were, in many respects, very unlike those of the modern Church of Rome; and we beg our readers to judge whether, when the practice is so different, it is likely that the doctrine is the same.

THE LAGO DI GARDA AND INFALLIBILITY.

We have before quoted Dr. Wylie's very interesting "Pilgrimage from the Alps to the Tiber." The following extract has struck us as peculiarly interesting and impressive? Will any of our Roman Catholic friends undertake to answer it?

"When the morning broke we were skirting the base of the Tyrolese Alps. I could see masses of snow on some of the summits, from which a piercingly cold air came rushing down upon the plains. In a little the sun rose, and thankful we were for his warmth. Day was again abroad on the waters and the hills, and soon we forgot the night, with all its untoward occurrences. The face of the country was uneven, and we kept alternately winding and climbing among the spurs of the Alps. At length the magnificent expanse of Lake Garda, the Benacus of the ancients, opened before us. In breadth it was like an arm of the sea. There were one or two tall masted ships on its waters; there were fine mountains on its northern shore, and on the east the conspicuous form of Monte Baldo leaned over it, as if looking at its own shadow in the lake. With the Lago di Garda came the memories of Tegn; for at the distance of twenty miles or so from its northern shore is 'the little town among the mountains' where the famous council assembled, in which so many things were voted to be true which had been open questions till then, but to doubt which now were certain and eternal anathema.

"The reformation addressed to Rome the last call to reconsider her position, and change her course while yet it was possible. It said to her, in effect, repent now—to-morrow it will be too late. Rome gave her reply when she summoned the Council of Trent. That Council crystallized, so to speak, the various doubtful opinions and dogmas which had been floating about in solution, and fixed the creed of Rome. It did more—it fixed her doom. Amid these mountains she issued the fiat of her fate. When she published the proceedings of Trent to the world, she said, 'Here I stand—I cannot do otherwise—so help me.' To whom did she make her appeal? To the Emperor in the first place, when she prayed for the vengeance of the civil sword, and to the Prince of Darkness, in the second, when she invoked damnation on all her opponents. There her course was irreversibly fixed. She dare not now look behind her: to change a single iota were annihilation. She must go forward amid accumulating errors and absurdities; amid opposing arts, and sciences, and knowledge, she must go steadily onward—onward to the precipice.

"It is interesting to mark, as we can in history, first, the feeble germinations of a papal dogma; next, its waxing growth; and at last, after the lapse of centuries, its full development and maturity. It is easy to conceive how a mere human science should advance only by slow and gradual stages—as astronomy, for instance, or geology, or even the more practical science of mechanics. Their authors have no infallible gift of discerning truth from error. They must observe nature; they must compare facts; they must deduce conclusions; they must correct previous errors; and this is both a slow and a laborious process. But infallibility is saved all this labour. It knows at once and from the beginning all

that is true, and all that is erroneous. It does so, or it is no infallibility. Why, then, was it not till the sixteenth century that infallibility gave anything like a fixed and complete creed to the Church? Why did it permit so many men, in all preceding ages, to live in ignorance of so many things in which it could so easily have enlightened them? Why did it permit so many questions to be debated which it could so easily have settled? Why did it not give that creed to the Church in the first century which it kept back to the sixteenth? Why does it deal out truth piecemeal: one dogma in this century, another in the next, and so on? Why does it not tell us all at once? And why, even to this hour, has it not told us all, but reserved some very important questions for future decision, or revelation rather?

"If it is replied that the Pope must first collect the suffrages of the Catholic bishops, this only lands us in deeper perplexities. Why should the Pope need assessors and advisers? Can infallibility not walk alone, that it uses crutches? Can an infallible man not know truth from error till first he has collected the votes of fallible bishops? Why should infallibility seek help, which it cannot in the nature of things need?

"If it is further replied that this infallibility is lodged betwixt the Pope and the Council, we are only confronted with greater difficulties. Is it when the decree has been voted by the Council that it becomes infallible? Then, the infallibility resides in the Council. Or, is it when it is confirmed by the Pope that it becomes infallible? In that case, the infallibility is in the Pope. Or is it, as others maintain, only when the decree has been accepted by the Church that it is infallible; and does the Pope not know whether he ought to believe his own decree till he has heard the judgment of the Church? We had thought that infallibility was one and indivisible; but it seems it may be parted in twain; nay, more, it may be broken down into an indefinite number of parts; and though no one of these parts taken separately is infallibility, yet taken together they constitute infallibility. In other words, the union of a number of finite quantities can make an infinite. Sound philosophy, truly!

"If we go back, then, as the Ultramontanist will, to the dogma that the seat of infallibility is the chair of Peter, the question returns, why cannot, or will not, the Pope determine in one age what he is able and willing to determine in another? The dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, for instance, if it is a truth now, was a truth in the first age, when it was not even dreamed of; it was a truth in the twelfth century, when it was dreamed of; it was a truth in the seventeenth century, when it gave rise to so many scandalous divisions and conflicts; and yet it was not till December, 1854, that infallibility pronounced it to be truth, and so momentous a truth that no one can be saved who doubts it. Will any Romanist kindly explain this to us? We can accept no excuses about the variety of opinion in the Church, or about the darkness of the age. No maze, no clouds, can dim an infallible eye. Infallibility should see in the dark as well as in the daylight; and an infallible teacher is bound to reveal all, as well as to know all.

"And how happens it, too, that the Pope is infallible in only one science—even the theological? In astronomy he has made some terrible blunders. In geography he has taken the earth to be a plain. In politics, in trade, and in all ordinary matters he is daily falling into mistakes. He cannot tell how the wind may blow to-morrow. He cannot tell whether the dish before him may not have poison in it. And yet the man who is daily and hourly falling into mistakes on the most common subjects has only to pronounce dogmatically and he pronounces infallibly. He has but to grasp the pen, with a hand, it may be, like Borgia's, fresh from the poisoned chalice or the stiletto, and straightway he indites lines as holy and pure as ever flowed from the pen of a Paul or a John."—Chap. xiii., p. 158.

THE ESTATICA OF YOUGHAL.

If the power of working miracles be one of the Notes of the true Church, as we are assured by that devoted defender of Rome, Bellarmine,* and our beloved country (Ireland) be so distinguished for her pure faith and adherence to the Church which alone pretends to that power, how comes it to pass that so many modern miracles should be wrought in other countries, and few or none in this isle of saints? Has it ever occurred to the minds of our inquiring Roman Catholic friends to consider whether the solution of the difficulty may not lie in this, that such wonders can only grow or flourish where imposture is protected and inquisitive scrutiny put down by ecclesiastical authority, and where there is no free press ready to support those who are on the watch to insist on public examination into the evidence of such alleged miracles?

A short account of an attempt to imitate the "Wonders of the Estaticas of the Tyrol" (so extolled and rendered so notorious by the credulity or piety of the late Earl of Shrewsbury), which occurred at Youghal, in the county of Waterford, about fifteen years ago, may, perhaps, serve to illustrate the difficulty of getting up a modern miracle in Ireland, and the consequent sterility of this country in such proofs of her possessing the true Church, whose eleventh mark, according to Bellarmine, is "the glory of miracles."

We take the outline from the documents which appeared in the public papers of the period, collected and republished by the Rev. John Aldworth, rector of Youghal, in a letter to the Right Hon. the Earl of Shrewsbury, a pamphlet well worthy of attention, but which, we believe, is now nearly out of print.

The facts were simply as follow.

In or about the year 1839 two establishments were

* Bellarm. de Notis Ecclesiæ, lib. iv. cap. xiv. vol. ii. p. 84. Colom. 1615.